Images of Indian leaders and flag on garments

261. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the images of Mahatma Gandhi, Tricolour and Jawaharlal Nehru printed on the undergarments shown by a US-based website; and

(b) if so, the steps taken through diplomatic and political channels to stop such indecent dipiction/printing of national leaders and national flag on undergarments?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) (a) and (b) The Government are aware of the offensive use of images Mahatma Gandhi, Tricolour and Jawaharlal Nehru on undergarments by US based online supplier. The Embassy of India in Washington wrote to the President of the company immediately to express outrage, requesting that this practice be discontinued. The matter has been followed up actively. Further, the US Government has also been apprised of this offensive practice of the said US company.

Repatriation of dead bodies of workers

262. SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIR be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of bodies of workers who died in the Gulf countries have been waiting for months to be repatriated due to procedural formalities;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government to help the families of such deceased workers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) There is no inordinate delay in general in transportation of mortal remains of Indian nationals from the Gulf region. The dead bodies are transported to the native places in India within a week or ten days, which is the normal time needed to complete requisite local formalities. However, sometimes there is delay in despatch of mortal remains, particularly in Saudi Arabia, where the completion of formalities takes from 4 to 6 weeks in cases of natural deaths and up to 16 weeks or even more, if the death has occurred due to unnatural causes.

(c) Immediately on receipt of information about death of Indian workers, Missions/Posts in the gulf countries initiate action to facilitate transportation of dead bodies to India. The Missions/Posts lialise with employers and local authorities to expedite the process which includes requisite documentation and clearances of local authorities, preparation of the dead bodies for transportation, obtaining consent of the family of the deceased for acceptance of the body. In cases, where the employers are non-cooperative or the deceased person was an illegal immigrant, financial assistance is also arranged by some of our Missions/ Posts in the Gulf region with contributions from community associations, welfare fund etc. Matters relating to compensation/terminal dues are actively pursued with employers/ insurance companies. In cases which are pending with the courts and/or appealed by the accused in the higher courts, the Missions/Posts keep the family members of the deceased informed of the status of the case and liaise with the lawyers for expeditous settlement of the cases.